DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 294 840 SP 030 180

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TITLE Training Retired Teachers for the Transition to Mentoring.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Master Teachers; *Mentors; *Retraining; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Behavior; Teacher Recruitment; *Teacher Retirement
IDENTIFIERS Beginning Teacher Induction

ABSTRACT

State legislatures and school systems have mandated or recommended mentoring supports for inexperienced teachers. This paper describes a program designed to recruit retired New York City public school teachers to be trained to serve as mentors for newly hired teachers. The study of the training program focused on the interface between the training experiences and the retired teachers' attitudes and behaviors as they became involved in the complexities of mentoring. An essential perspective built into the training design was that retired teachers were viewed as master teachers with valued expertise. Selected retired teachers participated in three separate, intensive, four-day pre-school workshops of 18 hours each. The workshops included large and small group discussions, role playing, demonstrations, and analysis of videotapes. The results of an analysis of the program's effectiveness are presented in three sections: phases of the transition from master teacher to mentor, comparisons of elementary and secondary teachers during the initial training, and comparisons across training sessions. Three tables are included. (JD)

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TRAINING RETIRED TEACHERS FOR THE TRANSITION TO MENTORING

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Paper prepared for presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, April 1988, New Orleans. No portion of this paper may be reprinted without written permission of the authors.

The Mentor/New Teacher Project was funded by the New York City Board of Education and the U.S. Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). This study of training and role transition was supported by a grant from the Exxon Corporation. Gloria Lodato Wilson served as research associate. The statistical analyses were done by Howard Andrews and Alyssa Morishima.

TRAINING RETIRED TEACHERS FOR THE TRANSITION TO MENTORING

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An important thrust of the educational reform movement concerns attracting and retaining new teachers. State legislatures and school systems across the country have mandated or recommended mentoring supports for inexperienced teachers. The New York City Board of Education Bureau of Staff Development, the City University of New York Center for Advanced Studies in Education, and Barnard College, Columbia University,* collaboratively sponsored the Mentor/New Teacher Project to address this concern in the New York City public schools. Retired New York City public school teachers were recruited, selected, and trained to serve as mentors for newly hired teachers. Drawing upon the expertise of retired teachers as mentors represents a unique approach to supporting novice teachers.

Researchers (Gray & Gray, 1985; O'Neil, 1981; and Phillips-Jones, 1977) have suggested the developmental qualities that characterize the mentor/protege relationship and that the mentoring relationship changes as mentors comprehend and act out evolving role complexities. Sacks and Wilcox (1986) found that prospective mentors experience a phased transition to the role of mentor and Showers (1985) suggests that training facilitates that dynamic, interactive process. The Mentor/New Teacher Project training model, reported in this study, was designed to foster the retired teachers' role transition and the development of effective mentor/protege relationships. The study, an initial analysis of research in progress, discusses the interface between the training experiences and the retired teachers' attitudes and behaviors as they became involved in the complexities of mentoring.

An essential perspective built into the training design was that retired teachers were viewed as master teachers with valued expertise. Their active involvement and participation in the workshops formed the conceptual framework and reflected Knowles'theory about adult learning (1980). This theory assumes that adults 1) are generally self-directing, 2) bring rich experiences to the learning environment that serve as resources

for themselves and others, 3) have a readiness to learn based on the direct applicability of the learning to their particular needs, and 4) are performance-centered in their orientation to learning. The participative mode facilitated a process in which retirees drew upon their collective wisdom and experiences to develop an understanding of mentor role complexity.

Background. The Mentor/New Teacher Pilot Project was initiated with summer workshops in July 1984 and continued with sixteen mentors and 43 new teachers in 15 elementary schools and one junior high throughout the 1984-'85 academic year. All mentors stayed in the pilot project and all new teachers who had a mentor were still teaching in June. The New York City Board of Education, encouraged by the retention of the 1984 mentored new teachers and the commitment of the pilot project mentors to continue servicing novice teachers, supported summer 1985 training for 72 newly retired teachers as an expansion of the project.

Participants in this Study. Of the 72 retired teachers who were trained during the summer of 1985, 53 (74 percent) accepted assignments in districts designated for drop-out prevention programs, along with ten Pilot Project mentors. During the 1985-86 school year, a total of 63 mentors worked with 181 new teachers. Mentors worked with each of three new teachers for 66 hours for a total of 198 hours of mentoring. Mentors reported to the schools in October 1985 and continued to mentor through June 1986. There were 45 women, 35 from 1985 training and 10 from 1984, and 18 men assigned to 47 different elementary, junior, and senior high schools. Nine men and 13 women of the 1985 group did not mentor during 1985-1986 due to illness, movement out of state, and non-acceptance of Board of Education specified school district assignment. The minimum age of participants was 58 and the oldest was 76 with a group average of 26.6 years of teaching experience.

Procedure Three, separate, intensive, four-day, pre-school workshops of 18 hours each were conducted for about 25 retired teachers to provide a personalized training experience and to accommodate participant availability. Since initial training took place during the summer prior to assignment as mentors, the goal was to define the components of the mentoring role and to help mentors view themselves as having the skills and abilities to make the transition to this role. The workshops included large and small group discussion, role playing, demonstrations, and analysis of videotapes. Through a collaborative effort, mentors applied a problem-solving approach

to explore the challenges which they could expect to experience in their new roles. Training continued throughout the school year.

At the close of each training session, open-ended questionnaires were completed by all participants. The questionnaires asked mentors what issues or concerns they had about their mentoring experiences and their reactions to the day's workshop. In total, there were four pre-school sessions, and one each in fall, winter, spring, and the end-of-term summer. These eight questionnaires provide the data for the content analysis of master teachers' responses to the mentoring role and document the changes which the retirees undergo as they work with their three new teachers during the year-long experience.

The focus of the quantitative analysis was on shifts in attitudes over the training sessions and any differences with respect to sex, group, and grade level of participants. An analysis of variance was used to address these foci. Because of the large number of items, a factor analysis was selected. There were 471 questionnaires which were coded for each mentor by session, sex, and grade level, and analyzed for content. Fifty response items were identified among the mentor responses, scored by the research associate; questioned items were discussed with the co-authors and the research associate, and 100 percent agreement was reached for scoring all responses. These 50 items were subjected to a factor analysis to identify salient dimensions of trainee attitudes. These factors were the dependent variables in the ANOVA.

Of the fifty items, nine items with fewer than 10 citations were subsequently dropped from the factor analysis. These items included concerns about issues such as separation (n=1), new teacher inadequacy (n=3), limitations of mentor role (n=4), inability to help new teacher in subject matter (n=6), or misgivings about mentoring and the schools receptiveness (n=9). All together the nine items represented 48 responses.

Forty-one items were factor analyzed and two did not load significantly on any of the twelve factors. These two items are comments about the role of mentor as counselor/friend, cited 86 times, and the mentors' sense of validating past skills and passing on knowledge, cited 57 times. An ANOVA of these two items is presently being conducted.

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Insert Table 1 about here.

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The remaining 39 items formed 12 factors (Table 1). An ANOVA examined differences in factor scores during the four

initial training sessions by sex, level, and group (Training Only v. 1985-1986 Participants). Then the four initial training session scores were averaged to form one mean score for each factor for the initial sessions, and all scores were standardized and adjusted for total responding to ascertain the true responding for a particular factor against total responding tendencies. ANOVAs were performed for each factor and for the 1985-1986 group compared to the 1984 mentors (pioneers) who had already participated in earlier training.

Results. The results are presented in three sections: phases of the transition, comparisons during initial training, comparisons across training sessions. ANOVAs of the adjusted standardized factor scores indicated significant differences across sessions for each of the 12 factors. A high factor score for a particular session indicates that the items comprising that factor were cited frequently during that session.

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Insert Table 2 about here.

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Transition Phases. Table 2 presents the Transition Phases from Master Teacher to Mentor and includes the factors whose highest score was evident during that phase. Assessment of the data illuminates four distinct phases in the mentor/new teacher relationship as the retirees make the transition to the new role and participate in the pre-service and subsequent school year training. During the initial phase of Orientation and Pre-relationship, data suggest that mentors are enthusiastic (Factor 5: excited about training and eager to start), anxious and uncertain about their new roles as mentors (Factors 3 and 9: Will they be assessors or partners?), and complaining about elementary and secondary teachers in the same group (Factor 6).

During the second phase of the transition to mentoring, Factors 2 and 10 are salient. Concerns during the Initiation and Relationship Building phase focus on the mentor serving as aide and general manager with some acknowledgement of frustration (Factor 2) and inadequacies of the new teachers (Factor 10). Additionally, during this phase, high factor scores for the pioneers are found on Factors 4, 8, and 12. Pioneers seem to identify their need for providing pedagogical help to the new teachers (Factor 4), the necessity for patiently connecting the novices with resources in the schools (Factor 8), and the national value of the project (Factor 12). Having already experienced a year of mentoring, perhaps Pioneers see more readily the multiple aspects of mentoring and can consolidate

their roles with the new teachers by the November training session as compared to the 1985 group which has only been in the schools for about one month.

Role Consolidation, the third phase of the transition, seems to occur for the 1985 group by January with Factor 4 at its highest value. The data indicate that these new mentors now focus on lesson planning and pedagogical techniques, feel positive about training and role playing and the need for the program, and are concerned with school administrators. The Pioneers at this point score high on Factor 7, citing their role with the new teacher as motivator, supporter, and coach. During the January training session, mentors drew upon the problem-solving model introduced during initial training to address the on-going challenges of their relationship with the new teachers.

The final phase of the transition to mentoring is Collegial Collaboration, supported in the spring and summer by 1985 mentors and Pioneers high scores on Factors 1 and 11, and by the 1985 group on Factors 7, 8, and 12 which the Pioneers had already cited. Mentors cite a strong sense of satisfaction, contribution, friendship, and progress with the new teachers, and they express confidence with the mentoring role and their new identification with it (Factor 1). Mentors also indicate concern for discipline and classroom control (Factor 11). At this point, the 1985 group also identifies with mentor as motivator (Factor 7), patient connector (Factor 8), and the national value and need for mentors to support new teachers (Factor 12). These data reveal the mentors' emerging confidence and sense of mastery which are gained from the opportunity to validate their years of teaching experience by helping and supporting beginning teachers.

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Insert Table 3 about here.

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Differences between Training Sub-Groups during Initial Sessions. Significant differences during initial training were found between elementary and secondary retired teachers on Factors 1, 5, and 12. (See Table 3.) Retirees at the secondary level scored higher than their elementary level peers on mentors as contributors, eagerness to start, and national value of the program. In the initial period, men more frequently than women cited Factor 4, concerns about pedagogical matters, the role with school administration, and their doubt about adjusting to new settings. Finally, the two groups participating in summer 1985 training differed on Factor 8, concern about logistics and making

connections. The group which decided not to mentor during the school year (Summer Training Only) cited time limitations, concern about placement, paperwork, and availability for arranging connections significantly more often than the group which elected to mentor during 1985-1986.

On-going Training Differences. The only significant difference among mentors during the school year was on Factor 3. As Table 3 indicates, men more than women scored high on the two items related to mentors as supervisors and evaluators, and relations with administrators.

Discussion. An examination of mentor attitudes and behaviors during the transition phases reveals that in Phase I the mentors were enthusiastic and eager to start. Some level of complaining was evident, but generally the focus of mentor responses related to role definition. Mentors questioned whether they would be partners or assessors of the new teachers. Even more than the elementary, the secondary retired teachers expressed an eagerness to begin mentoring and perceived themselves as presently possessing the knowledge to pass on to new teachers. This subject matter competence appeared to grow out of their discipline based teaching experiences. Furthermore, the secondary retirees seemed to perceive that their mentoring would result in the retention of new teachers and improved teacher perfomance, and thus the program would be of national value.

In the initial training phase, more men than women focussed on pedagogical, administrative, and adjustment issues. In their last school based positions, more men than women had been school administrators, principals, assistant principals, and department chairs. These three factors were of critical concern to them as they anticipated new roles within the school's structure.

An interesting difference between the Training Only group and the 1985-1986 Mentor group was the greater focus of the Training Only on time limitations, logistics, placement, paperwork, role as mentor, and role with other faculty. It is not clear whether the Training Only group selected themselves out of mentoring because of workshop experiences on the reflective, risk-taking complexity of the mentoring role or because of time constraints and other factors.

The factors seem to support the Transition Phases (Table 2) as a developmental process. During Phase II, mentors build their relationship with the new teachers but generally still view the mentoring role as a dichotomous one: as aide and manager or evaluator of new teacher inadequacies. On the other hand, the

Pioneers, who have already experienced a full year of mentoring, have a fuller sense of mentor role complexity. Pioneers assisted the new teachers with teaching techniques and specifics of organization and developed diverse strategies to provide for new teachers' needs. At the same time that new mentors are establishing their relationships with the new teachers, pioneers move more quickly through the relationship building phase and into role consolidation.

For all mentors, the Role Consolidation phase represents the immersion into mentoring. The established relationship permits mentors to focus on specific pedagogical tasks and challenges. Mentor to mentor exchanges are viewed positively. Developing positive relationships between mentors and administrators and new teachers and administrators indicates mentors' accommodation and acceptance of role complexity.

In the Collegial Collaboration phase, all mentors, 1985 and pioneers, express satisfaction, feel rewarded by the new teachers' progress and friendship, and reveal a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. They also share concern about discipline and control. Irrespective of experience, classroom management seems to be an on-going issue for teachers, whether retired or not. In this phase, the 1985 mentors evidenced understanding of the multiple facets of mentoring, identified in Phase II by the pioneers. This suggests that the longer a person is in mentoring and in training, the more readily able the mentor is to establish an effective relationship with new teachers, to accommodate role complexity, to identify specific role challenges, and to explore options for change.

Implications. Although mentoring as a concept and practice has existed over time, the movement toward institutionalizing mentor support programs in school systems is a recent occurrence. The uniqueness of the Mentor/New Teacher Project is that for the first time a school system has tapped the expertise of its own retired teachers to support new teachers. The Mentor/New Teacher training program is presented as one model that draws upon the participants' rich experiences to facilitate their transition to the new role of mentor. Understanding the developmental stages of mentoring and their interface with training could aid other school districts to draw creatively upon the skills and interests of retired teachers who desire to remain active professionally.

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TABLE 1

FACTORS IN THE TRANSITION TO MENTORING

FACTORS	LABEL	# OF ITEMS
Factor 1	Contributor	10
Factor 2	Aide or Manager	5
Factor 3	Assessor	2
Factor 4	Pedagogical Helper	6
Factor 5	Enthusiast	3
Factor 6	Complainer	1
Factor 7	Coach or Cheerleader	2
Factor 8	Patient Connector	4
Factor 9	Partner	3
Factor 10	Evaluator of New Teacher Inadequacy	1
Factor 11	Concern about Discipline	1
Factor 12	Program National Value	1

All items in a factor correlated with the other items > .36.

TABLE 2

TRANSITION PHASES from MASTER TEACHER to MENTOR

Factors		Phases	Mentor Attitudes and Behaviors	Focus of Training
3,5,6,9	I	Orientation	Exhibited eagerness and enthusiasm	Pre-School and pre-contact
		Pre-Relationship	Concerned with specifics	Simulation activities
			Showed other Ms* respect	
2, 10	II	Initiation and	Needed by some NTs,* rejected by others	Trust-Building activities
Pioneers 2, 10 plus 4, 8, 12		Relationship Building	Established credibility through teaching skills	Individual NT needs
			Developed multi-strategies	
4	III	Role Consolidation	Viewed relations with NTs as complex	Challenges using Problem-Solving Model
Pioneers 7			Perceived tasks as diverse	
			Refined strategies	
			Experienced beginning feelings of validation	
			Considered M-M exchanges important	
1,7,8, 11, 12	IV	Collegial Collaboration	Evidenced variability, greater depth of M/NT relationship	Culminating activities
Pioneers 1, 11			Explored NT requests	Issues of separating
			Increased validation	

*Note: M = mentors; NT = new teachers

Table 3

Analysis of Variance by Level, Sex and Group

FACTOR	SOURCE OF VARIATION	SESSION	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$
CFACT1	LEVEL[a]	INITIAL	.003	-.36	-.08
CFACT4	SEX[b]	INITIAL	.002	.07	.66
CFACT5	LEVEL	INITIAL	.019	.84	1.16
CFACT8	GROUP[c]	INITIAL	.000	-.04	.68
CFACT12	LEVEL	INITIAL	.032	.41	.67
CFACT3	SEX	5 - 8	.014	-.48	-.01

[a] Level 1 = elementary; Level 2 = secondary

[b] Sex: 1 = female; 2 = male

[c] Group: 1 = 1985 - 1986 Participants; 2 = Training Only